il4 p1 pneu17

PNEU Box II, Envelope 17: Transcription of letters and individual pages of letters from Charlotte Mason, 1864-78

The originals are marked with a pencilled number in the top right hand corner, corresponding to the numbered items below.

1. The following two letters are in a small envelope addressed to Charlotte Mason at Bishop Otter College, postmarked Clifton, Bristol, 7 Dec. (18)74. A sheet of light blue paper appears also to come from this envelope. It has the words 'Madame Rey School Paris 1871. On the way to Luzern, with Miss Brandreth'.

*Letter from CM to Lizzie Groveham from Luzerne*

Pension Luter
Luzerne, May 2nd

My dear Lizzie,

Many thanks for the pains you took to help us to an abode. It was really very ingenious of you to find us out on the steamer. We had great amusement when the man hunted up "Miss Mason", but the thing wh. is puzzling is how I got your letter at last from Devonshire. We did not go to the hotel you spent [deleted] stayed at, but at the Louvre Hotel, which is miles big and very comfortable, more comfortable a good deal than smaller places, the rooms are so many and so large that we do not get in each other's way, and there are too many people for any attempt at sociability to be possible. We stayed a very pleasant week in Paris after three delightful days in Boulogne. And a very gay French town is Boulogne notwithstanding the wonderful way in which it is over-run by English. We saw more costume there than anywhere. Then we broke our journey at Troyes, a quaint old town with narrow streets and overhanging storeys and a very fine Gothic cathedral. Our next stay was at Basle, where – think of it dear – the Rhine flowed under the window of our hotel, flowed with such a force as I had never seen before between banks on which the buildings were grouped in a picturesque way beyond description. And then we came on here – and how shall I tell you what it is here? First we live on a pine covered hill – below lies the town with its pleasant brown tiles, beyond the lake, not unlike Loch Lomond in the way it is broken up by the mountains into separate lakelets. And then the mountains! The glorious Alps, snow covered now, happily and delighting us every hour with endless play of colour and apparent change of form. How I wish you could see it all! We are very happily situated in the house with two nice educated Swiss sisters as hostesses, who make every thing most comfortable. And such views from every window! A comfort for me as I have most of this sweet week in Lucerne in bed. This journey has knocked me up greatly, tho' Miss Brandreth's sweet love and tender care made it so very easy. We never travelled for more than six hours at a time, and always broke our journey at good comfortable hotels. But I must not write you a long letter now dear as letters are an effort beyond me. I am going to ask you to do some thing. It is Lina's (?) birthday on the 8th. I want you to get 'The Hidden Life' by A Saphire, published by Shaw, and send it to her for me. And also I want you to read at least the 'With Jesus' sermon before you send it, wh. need not be in any hurry as it cannot go in time for the birthday. I heard such a beautiful holy sermon from the writer while I was in London. I must owe you for it till you [deleted] I come. Much love to the chicks of whom please send me news. One of your loving letters will be very welcome to your affectionate friend, C.M.

*Letter from CM to Lizzie Groveham from Paris*

Chez Mme. Rey
41 bis Rue La Fontaine
Auteuil
Paris

Dearest Lizzie,

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A line to say your ... were not drowned but had a good passage and a far less wearisome return journey than that we feared (?) wd. be ... very gladly received by your friend. And on the whole are you pleased with your visit to Paris? And has it done you good? I believe it has thoroughly refreshed you both – you were looking a world better. I have not ceased regretting that you took that long journey up here in the rain. I wish I had gone to your hotel and waited till you came. I missed you both much at first, but really there are very companionable pleasant people here, and the arrangements are most comfortable. I am really vexed I did not make you stay over ...nday. There was a grand ... fete and ..... etc. which could have interested you surely and from which you might have cared to borrow some ideas. So I want to try and tell you all about it, while it is still fresh in my mind. The children all in sp[o]tless white, without a speck of colour in ribbon or flower were arranged on two sort of galleries under the trees in the grounds. Between these was a platform covered with drapery, on it several chairs, tables laden with works (?) and great piles of what looked like flowers. A couple of pianos were placed in the grounds, endless charming devices and decorations, and in a ring outside all this, chairs for the two hundred or [so] visitors who were assem[bled] ... before the proceedings by delivering an oration ... far more elocution and acting and with far more success than the folks we saw at the Opera Comique. Then began the prize giving – every child at the school had prizes. The difference in merit was shown by the number, some had fifteen or sixteen. One tall, elegant girl, an Alsatian, appeared to be the head of the school and bore her honours very gracefully. The prize giving lasted a long time, Mm. Hilare calling out the names and one of the priests, of whom there were half a dozen on the platform, presenting the books and placing the crown (of green artif. leaves) on the head of each young damsel who carried off prizes. Between every half dozen prizes we had music, sometimes a dozen or so of the girls singing, sometimes only one or two. They played too duets and trios. They sang <u>beautifully</u>. But the singing never sounds so well as in their chapel – a lovely little chapel wh. forms part of the establishment. You have no idea how big this place is, as big as the Ho. and Co. About a couple [deleted] [of?] dozen of those who had already received green coronets were called up to be crowned with white wreaths – for diligence in working for the poor. Others again were made lovely with pink wreaths, for 'sagesse'. Others were called up to receive a white flower in their hands, and others a pink, for some special desert. Each of these last groups turned to the visitors and made the loveliest curtsey in the world. It certainly was a very pretty sight. Then each girl, as she received her reward, found out her friends in the crowd – and such reverberating kisses!! When it was all over, follow [deleted] and the chn. had gone, followed an interminable dinner, à la Russe, with the places changed about a dozen or more times, to some fifty people, when the champagne began to flow, did not the fun grow [?] [to top of first page, vertically] fast and furious. Then followed a dance, and then bed, of wh. I was very glad. Be quite easy abt. me dear. The night annoyance I complained of has never happened to me since. The table is excellent, the people very pleasant companions, especially one or two. We go out sight-seeing, etc. a great deal and spend the evenings very pleasantly in the room ... in the ... very ... [Centre of first page, vertically] Excuse my enclosing this. In have to write Loise[?] a hasty line about a governess and thought this might as well go in too. We went to the Luxembourg etc. [?] this afternoon. Reward me for all this with a nice long letter telling me all about the dear chicks. Ever yours, Lottie

i2

[along right-hand edge of first page, vertically]
Much obliged to you for leaving me some more money. I found I had to pay £9[?] instead [?] of £5 as I thought.

—oooo—

<u>Loose pages from letters of CM (though 10 is a complete letter)</u>

2. [Single sheet, dated in later hand to 1878 (side A) and 1871 (side B). Side B has a diagonal line in pencil. Miss Brandreth left Worthing in 1873 or soon after, and so the letter must date from after this date, probably not long after]

i13

... inevitably have posted off to the Vicar. I have not forgotten the rapidity with which the B.G.M.S.[Bradford Girls Middle School] was projected and accomplished. Sally Coleman is very anxious to see you (breathe it not in Manchester). She says she

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would be so very glad if you and your husband would spend a day or two with them some time on your way southwards. And I should be equally glad for you to see them. They are such nice simple people. I think I told you I wanted to see Dr Coleman and that that was a principal reason for my going there. He makes me more sure than ever that I must get less work. Worthing is terribly dull without dear Miss Brandreth. Still there is plenty to do.

Give my little god-child a great kiss and tell her I do want a letter from her so badly. Poor wee Millie. Is she better? It is too sad to think of the wee womanie suffering so. Did I tell you about Sallie's [= Sally Coleman] child? He is a fine little fellow, but was away at a farm-house when I was there. With best love and many thanks for a *scheme that I believe is ... devised for my benefit.*
*Yours ever,*
Lottie

3. [Three sheets of note paper headed 'House of Education, Ambleside', pinned together. The handwriting appears to be Elsie Kitching's. It seems therefore to be a transcription of a letter from CM to Lizzie Groveham. Dated in later hand 1863, but the date must be 1865 (see Notes from Lizzie Groveham). Lizzie Groveham has been trying to persuade CM to join her in Bradford to help set up a new Middle School. The final paragraph below may indicate that the reason for EG's invitation to CM was the imminent arrival of a child]

i3 ...I have waited day after day trying to see my duty clearly, trying to see that it lay in the direction of Bradford. I have really not been able to write to you. Again and again I have sat down to write but I could not answer your loving letter otherwise than as you wished, and I might not answer it so ... [three and a half lines deleted] A preventive Providence hems me in on every side. I feel now that I dare not leave Worthing. I have been blessed and prospered beyond my wildest hope since I have been here. My work has been marked out for me and then prospered under my hand. All has gone well with me. And now it seems that I have been made necessary here and must not take my hand from the plough. Do not think that this is vanity on my part. I do not think for an instant that I need be necessary, but when they say that it is impossible to carry out my life work without me – that they will not attempt it, will give it up as a thing impossible – what can I do? Then you know that I thought of giving up my work here really and truly, perhaps I may say solely because I felt that I was no longer able to do my duty here, but they have said [two and a half lines deleted] that if I give up my work it will be worse than ill done – it will be left undone altogether and many such things so that plea (?) is gone and none but selfish ... remain. If I leave Worthing it can only be because I shall be so much happier, so altogether happy with my friends. As for work, wherever I am I shall be seen to work as I do now and my friends would only be worried by vain attempts to prevent me.

Try to see it with me. You see, I have given it long and anxious consideration. I have kept it all to myself. I have thought it out by myself and have not allowed myself to be influenced by anybody. I cannot decide otherwise than I have done and it only remains to me to thank you with a very full heart for all that your generous love purposed to do for me. And now [transcriber inserts ... above line] will you not go on with the scheme and carry it out yourself. You will do it nobly and well, quite as well alone as with my help and it is a great work. I long to know that there is a Middle School in Bradford conducted by you. *It would be a great pity to have gone so far and then to halt and leave the carrying out of the work to others.* [*This sentence lightly deleted] I have many things to write and tell you about but until I know your mind about this great thing it seems that all other subjects are idle and indifferent.

*You can't guess what lots of plans I have already made for next summer when you will not visit me. Oh no!* [*This paragraph lightly deleted]

4. 15 Steyne, Worthing

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June 20th 1878 [?]. The date is not clear, but from the content of the letter must be 1878, as added with ? in a later hand.

My dear Lizzie,
I fear I have left you so much in arrears for news that I hardly know where to begin. I think at this end where I now am – a loose end at 15 Steyne, where dear Miss Brandreth is taking the most delightful care of me, nursing me up and spoiling me in the most kind way. Before I came here I went to Chester to make the final arrangements about a high school there. While there I felt very poorly, so went to Dr Coleman on my way back. He said I must have perfect rest for six months and took me to a physician ['Forster' added over text in later hand; see 5 below] in Birmingham who said the same thing only more decidedly. Therefore I gave up the Chester school, went to Chichester for a little to fill a gap tho' against advice, and since then I have been here with dear Miss Brandreth, who certainly does possess the secret of rest. Our next move is to Lucerne, whither we go in a fortnight and stay for two or three months as the case may be. Another lady travels with us, a Miss D'Arcy. Otherwise sister Maria, the lady with whom Miss Brandreth went to work the Hocton parish and who is now done up and like somebody else in need of rest. How am I? Will be your next kind ? – very well when I am doing nothing, but knocked up by the least effort , the least attempt to bring myself together and attend to anything. However the Birmingham man promised me that if I would take the 'absolute rest' he recommended, I should be quite well and longing for work when it was over. And so I try to keep in good heart, but it is not always easy.

i4

5. 25 Hagley Road, Edgbaston, and 16 Temple Row, Birmingham,
Dated Jan 31, 78

i5 I have this day seen Miss Mason & found that she is suffering from the effects of overwork. Her condition requires absolute rest for some months, and I am quite unable to sanction her doing any educational work for the present.

Belthazar Foster MD, FRCP

6. Slip of paper, about 15cm by 5 cm:

i6 Hair, the darkest possible shade of brown verging on black. Shoes 5 height 5.4

7. Envelope only:

i7 Dr Coleman 1878
Ordering a rest

8. Single sheet. Headed 'Lincoln Farm, Sherbourne [?]. In a later hand '1878 ?'. Perhaps right-hand sheet missing.

i8 Dearest Lizzie,
Do not think dear that I have forgotten you because I have not written sooner. The fact is, my head has been so good for nothing that I have been barely able to do quite necessary work & now have run over here for a rest which I hope will so far set me up that I shall be able to go on till Xmas. Do no be uneasy dear. I am bodily quite well& mentally too, now I am here in this beautiful country. I find the work at the college too trying & have settled to give it up at Xmas & take a rest. Now don't go proposing all sorts of wild adventures in Germany and elsewhere ... [vertically on front page] for the pyramids but at present I can make no such plans. So heigh-ho! for the pyramids. I shall return to the college next week. When write [?]
Your very loving
Lottie

9. 4 sheets pinned together.
Sheet 1 [no date, but must be before 1872]

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I have no news to tell you love unless such items as we have recommenced our night Sch. & got a few fresh pupils. I am having a terrible struggle to get my school under govt. & am in hopes I shall succeed – will it not be a good thing? I have as usual been making wonderful resolutions about what I shall do when we begin school again. I mean to be so firm, so kind, so loving, so altogether admirable. I really feel half inclined to fall down at the feet of what I "mean to be", and say to it "Stand there and be my admiration and my praise". Alas! I may do so, for what I "mean to be" is the only part of myself that I shall ever be able to admire.
How are Mother and Father, Sisters and brother, & the dear little stranger? Give my love to all especially the last mentioned.
I shd. like to see you before you go to your school. Will you call in on your way? How I wish I were situated somewhere on the line between Preston and Bradford. Who knows! If I change my school I shall certainly try to get one up north.
And now, Love, I think I have given you a sufficient dose of very "small talk", so, as I have really nothing to say I will bid you good byes.
Your ever most loving friend [?]
Lottie

Sheet 2 [no date]:

& Landseer's pictures best. One by the former [deleted, Gainsborough inserted by later hand] was very generally admired. It is a portrait, I believe, called the "Blue Boy". The dress is of a peculiar blue, most difficult to paint, & it is said to be wonderfully well done. But this was not the great charm for me. It was the picture standing out so boldly and substantially from the canvass. The face so full of the present boy & the future man. So beautiful in its purpose-like earnestness. After gazing a few moments I found it difficult to believe that it was only a painting. Some of the landscapes were beautiful, exceedingly. But I am wearying you dear. I will not say more on this subject now. If you would like to hear more of it just send me word in your next.
On Tuesday I went to see some London schools, which did not strike me as very excellent. Today, Thursday, I am going home & must soon stop writing as I shall be late for the train else. I have written your letter before returning lest I should not then have time. The people here have been very nice.

Sheet 3 [must be 1873, from reference to the death of Mr Brandreth]:

... abundant time to write. I shall be so grieved if I have prevented you form making arrangements for the holiday. Please write soon & settle my mind as to that.
And now for my story. Dear Mr Brandreth has gone to his rest. Miss Brandreth is going abroad for a couple of years, so your friend is taking the opportunity to break loose from Worthing for the present & make a new way of life for herself. I have fully pondered, dear, and shall always be grateful for the kind & wise & loving letter you wrote me when I told you before of my teaching scheme. All that you said, & what you hinted & did not say, was perfectly true. But on the other hand I cannot just now think of any life so little responsible, & I ache with responsibility. So, if the way opens, I mean to try. My plan is to leave here at Xmas, sit for the Cambridge Women's Exam. in June

Sheet 4 [continuation of Sheet 3]:

... and teach, as I said before, English literature in various schools. As to ways & means, Miss Read went up to the Ho. and Co. today, saw dear Mr Dunning, asked him about it. He says there is an immense demand for women teachers in that way, that Miss Chessas receives a guinea a lesson (wherefore might I hope for half?). Mr Evans writes that he thinks there wd. be a good opening for me, advises me to write to Miss Chessas for advice & information, & promises to help me if he can. So I think the way is opening. You see I don't want to teach more than three days a week if I can manage it, for a while at any rate.

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I am anxious to tell you all this in the very beginning, dear, that you may not have me on your mind. Your kind offer has tempted me, but I know how it would be. You would want to be generous always & I shd. want you to be just to yourself & we should never satisfy ourselves that things were right. Besides I do think one such excellent teacher as you is quite enough for the B.M.S. it wd. be coals to Newcastle for me to come. Nevertheless, dear, I do thank you with all my heart for your kind wish for me.

10. Letter headed 'Worthing, Wednesday' (1877?)

My dear Lizzie,

Many thanks for your nice long letter which was to have had a nice long answer directly I got to Worthing, but in the first place S.C. [Sally Coleman] kept me by various kind devices such as locking up my clothes, writing to Mrs Goble, etc. a week longer than I meant to stay. And you know what grievous news greeted me when I got here. I can hardly tell you what a shock and pain it was. I counted Miss Read among my dearest, truest friends & now she is gone find I cared for her even more than I thought. I wish I could tell you how beautiful & perfect her life was – her father's favourite maxim is 'throw perfection into all you do', & this idea seemed to be the groundwork of her life, & this too out of a feeling of real humility. She seemed to feel i10 that she was not clever nor wise nor very good, could do no great thing for God, & so she gave her full attention to every little task & tried to do it perfectly. If she wrote a letter, put in a few stitches, saw to any little thing for her father, all was done alike perfectly. What she was as a daughter no one can tell. Her life was so utterly devoted to her father, so merged in his, that no one saw it was devotion or thought it possible she could have any pleasure apart from him. I suppose such a funeral was ever seen in Worthing. The chapel, where the first of the service was read by special permission as it is not licensed for burial or marriage services, was crowded with people, all or very nearly all in mourning and amongst them there was not a dry eye. The poor will miss her terribly. I'm afraid they will hardly find again such a kindly considerate tolerant friend. Her poor father is at present keeping up with what I fear is unnatural brightness. Tomorrow is my last day here. Then I go on to London to Miss Brandreth. I had been looking forward to my week here & the sea air, the quiet, the sight of old friendly faces, &above all to seeing a good deal of Miss Read, but none of these hopes have been realized. She has left nothing but her bright example. & do pray, dear, that I may try to follow it, for for every fault of mine I do think she had the opposite virtue.

You want news of S.C. & I hardly know where to begin. She is very delicate, much thinner than when you knew her, but very pretty & graceful & winning & much younger looking than I tho' she is really three or four years older. Her home is a most prosperous and happy one & and I tell her it is time she & her husband had got over their honeymoon, but that is the way with you married people. You ...

[Vertically on top of first page] one can quite understand. Tell me much news of the three little girls, to show their godma's much love. Also tell me how you are.

With much love, yours ever,

Lottie

11. Single sheet, dated in different hand Jan. 1864 [to Lizzie Groveham]

... new home. Oh, it would be so nice. But, pet, I really could not suggest such a thing i11 to Miss Read. I did not tell her what the Dr said, partly because I do not at all believe it. Were I to, she would propose another mistress & me to be a sort of thinking and governing, but not working party. She hinted something of the sort before. Besides, darling, my duty lies here at present. There is a work to be done in Worthing that I feel it is possible for me to do – indeed one of the very few things that I am at all fitted for. The tone of intellect & feeling here is very low. The people want to be raised,

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forced if need be, to a higher level. The trades people being almost the only class resident, give tone to the town, & that tone is narrow, coarse and illiberal. Well, dear, we know that if the young women of any district be elevated, they will raise the rest. So, pet, my work is, by means of our school for tradesmen's daughters, to refine & cultivate the young women & thro' them to help a ...

12. Last page of a letter [to Lizzie Groveham], no date, but probably c. 1877

i12

Still, it may be the best thing for me. A day of small things is very good for one sometimes, don't you think so? And indeed the amount of fuss that used to be made about my work could not have been very good for me. Heigho, my Lizzums! The ornament of a meek and quiet spirit is, I think, the change I wish most for just now. You wish to know, dear old friend, what change I propose making in my way of life. Well, I did think of making a grand change at Xmas. I thought that instead of teaching school any longer, I should try how it would answer to go about from school to school, in Brighton and the other places round about here, teaching nothing but the English language. Well, Mr & Miss Read & Miss Brandreth and everyone else here thought it an admirable plan and advised me to try it, but I promised Mrs Lewis I would wait a year first, and I think it will probably end as it began. Good bye, dear, your ever loving

Lottie